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Viewing cable 10PARIS47, FRANCE URGES COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO YEMEN

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
10PARIS47	2010-01-13 16:58	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Paris
Appears in these articles: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/state_cables_show_rising_concern_about_al_qaeda_in_yemen/2011/04/07/AFrH6EAD_story.html				

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PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR
DE RUEHFR #0047/01 0131658
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 131658Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8060
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 000047
SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2020
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#) [YM](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRANCE URGES COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO YEMEN
REF: A. PARIS 25
[1](#)B. 2009 PARIS 1335
Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Young, for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).
[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The French advocate a comprehensive and coordinated approach to Yemen and they support the Yemeni government's pursuit of a ceasefire linked to broad national dialogue, according to Jean-Baptiste Faivre, French MFA Deputy Assistant Secretary-equivalent. Faivre told poloff January 12 that France has urged Yemeni leaders to ensure that a program of "round table" national dialogue is broadly inclusive and wide-ranging, touching on the concerns that have precipitated the civil war in the north, secession threats in the south, economic stagnation, and governance problems. Although not opposed to external mediation as a means to end the civil war, GOF officials believe Yemeni and Saudi opposition to mediation will prove impossible to overcome in the near term. Nonetheless, French officials may probe their Yemeni and Saudi counterparts to determine how a mediator might contribute constructively in the future, and the French would be willing to coordinate their efforts with the USG. More broadly, Faivre argued, the USG and the European Union (EU) should adopt a coordinated approach to the various problems plaguing Yemen. He indicated that the GOF still awaits word from the British as to the format, aims, and invitees for the proposed multilateral conference on Yemen in London at the end of January. In the meantime, Faivre said the French will continue their on-going efforts to train and advise Yemeni officials in various ministries, to provide limited financial support to the government, and to collaborate with Yemeni counter-terrorism efforts. Finally, Faivre said the French worry that excessive media attention to terrorism in Yemen could aggravate the problem by attracting more terrorists to the country, and urged discretion in official communications. END SUMMARY.

TOWAD A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY APPROACH TO YEMEN

12. (C) Jean-Baptiste Faivre said the French currently support the Yemeni government's pursuit of a ceasefire in the civil war up north, followed by national dialogue, rather than any immediate efforts to bring in an external mediator (refel A). He encouraged the USG to join France in urging Yemeni leaders to ensure that a program of national dialogue is broadly inclusive and wide-ranging, touching on the concerns that have precipitated the civil war in the north, secession threats in the south, economic stagnation, and governance problems. When they discuss the prospect of national dialogue with Yemeni officials, Faivre said, the French repeatedly stress its importance in improving the image of the government. Although not in any way opposed to the prospect of external mediation as a means to end the civil war, GOF officials believe Yemeni and Saudi opposition to mediation will prove impossible to overcome in the near term, according to Faivre. Yemeni President Saleh, he said, has rejected any proposals which could appear to place the rebels on the same level as the government. Moreover, Faivre noted, Saleh has bad memories of Qatari mediation attempts from approximately 12 years ago (NFI), which the Yemenis reportedly believe afforded the rebels time to regroup. Nonetheless, he reported that French officials may probe their Yemeni and Saudi counterparts to determine when and how a mediator might contribute constructively in the future, and the French would be willing to coordinate and share information about any similar efforts made by the USG. "We are open to all tools," Faivre said, adding that we have nothing to lose by asking the Yemenis and Saudis to consider a mediated resolution to the civil war.

13. (C) In the short term, however, Faivre argued, the USG and the European Union (EU) should adopt a coordinated, comprehensive approach to the various problems plaguing Yemen. He indicated that the GOF still awaits word from the British as to the format, aims, and invitees for the proposed multilateral conference on Yemen in London at the end of January. The French have indications the British may want to transform the conference into a pledging event rather than a policy discussion. The GOF would like to know what the planners envisage for follow up, Faivre said, and they have emphasized to the British the importance of discretion at the event in order to avoid creating unintended consequences (see paragraph seven, below).

FRENCH AID FOCUSES ON POLITICS, SECURITY, ECONOMY

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14. (C) In addition to providing political and diplomatic support for the Yemeni government's effort to end their civil war, the French plan to continue their on-going efforts to train and advise officials in various ministries. They focus much of their effort in training the Yemeni coast guard, Faivre reported, including counter-piracy efforts, but they also work with the police, armed forces, and special forces. In one notable recent appointment to a Yemeni ministry, the GOF sent Jean-Bernard Bolvin, the young son of a leading activist in President Sarkozy's political party (UMP) and a former advisor to Deputy Minister Rama Yade, to serve as a counselor to the Minister of Planning and Cooperation, Abdulkarim Ismail Al-Arhabi. Bolvin, who began his work in Yemen the week of January 4, will remain in contact with the French Embassy in Sanaa, according to Faivre.

15. (C) As to economic aid, the GOF has for several years listed Yemen as a priority recipient of development support. The GOF set aside 110 million euros for allocation between 2006 and 2010. As they considered supplementing this grant with loans, Yemen's extensive sovereign debt stymied GOF plans, according to Faivre. In 2009, the French sought to collaborate with the Kuwaitis in providing financial support to Yemen (refel B), but Faivre said that effort has failed.

16. (C) Finally, the French also currently cooperate with the Yemenis in their counter-terrorism efforts, Faivre reported, noting that their cooperation is far more limited than ours. "We are ready to work with you," he asserted. He also said the French worry are concerned the Yemeni intelligence services may lack the capacity to meet the increasing demands they face.

TOO MUCH PUBLIC ATTENTION CREATES RISKS FOR YEMEN

17. (C) Faivre worried that the recent rush of media attention to Yemen could obscure the true extent of the terrorist threat currently emanating from the country. Within the span of a few days, he said, the world press seemed to declare Yemen the primary front in the war against terrorism. "We must evaluate the situation as precisely as possible," he noted, "or we may over- or under-estimate the true extent of the threat." Faivre said that, according to GOF sources, several hundred Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists currently operate in Yemen, and most of them come from abroad. As we help the Yemenis confront this group, he warned, we could increase rather than decrease their number if we draw too much attention to their presence in Yemen. The media focus on the country risks increasing the country's allure to terrorists, who may soon perceive Yemen as a particularly prestigious destination in which to base themselves. In addition, the French worry a media fixation with terrorism in Yemen could offer the government a pretext to avoid addressing its serious internal problems. Therefore, he argued, our governments should minimize public

statements about terrorism in Yemen and work to persuade the British to ensure the London conference remains as discrete as possible.

18. (C) NOTE: Faivre explained that the EU had planned to release a declaration supporting a ceasefire and national dialogue in Yemen before journalists around the world noted the links between Yemen and the attempted terrorist attack on Christmas day. He said they will soon release a statement along those lines. END NOTE.

PEKALA